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- > **Procigar 2019 draws record participation as Dominican cigars delight**
- > **Industry scrambles to react to FDA's new flavored cigar guidance**



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Contents

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Departments

- 8 Editor's Letter
- 10 Retailing News

- 12 Industry News
- 15 Personnel Moves
- 16 Calendar
- 28 Smokeless Update
- 30 Pipe Update
- 32 Brand News
- 36 Product Showcase
- 38 Advertisers Index

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Features

18 RETAIL PROFILE

Fulfilling a Dream

Famed NBA star Karl Malone may be synonymous with Utah (Jazz), but for the Malone family home is in Ruston, La., where their Legends Cigar and Vape shop is a dream come true.

By Frank Seltzer

23 More than Just Cigars

Impressed by Guillermo Leon's anniversary rum, Karl Malone is now the U.S. distributor of the special limited edition blend.



24 PRODUCING REGIONS

Procigar Festival 2019 Dominican Cigars Maintain Their Luster

The balance of U.S. premium cigar imports may have tipped to Nicaragua's favor in recent years, but the Dominican Republic's leading cigar makers still dazzle with top-quality, exciting releases.

By Frank Seltzer

26 NATO NEWS

Proposed Guidance from FDA on Flavored Cigars

FDA's plans for regulating flavored cigars and vape products were unveiled in March; as written they will have a big impact on the industry. With only a small period for public comments before the agency sets final language, a quick response was crucial.

By Thomas Briant



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Editor's LETTER

SMOKESHOP
THE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY ON TOBACCO RETAILING

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The Absurd State of Combustible Leaf Regulation

"Marijuana never killed anyone!" is the exuberant, oft-repeated rallying cry of the exploding cannabis industry that continues to simultaneously pursue—state-by-state—legalized medical use, decriminalization, and now with increasing fervor, recreational use.

Contrast that to the federal government's conclusion that "there is no safe level of smoking [tobacco]."

We *won't* attempt to debate the merits or morality of the fast-changing public mindset on cannabis which, by the way, remains a Schedule 1 narcotic at the federal level, rendering state-sanctioned recreational use viable due only to a lack of enforcement. This industry—estimated at \$10 billion in the U.S. last year for all legal medical and recreational use—is a strange exercise in shaky foundations.

One needs look no further than the Trump administration's recent Cuban trade policy reversals—dashing the hopes of many businesses that jumped into that void—to note that nothing is ever etched in stone. But even for a White House that has deep-rooted trouble deciding what its policies are when looking beyond its core base, the mixed signals over cannabis can best be decoded by reading between the lines: cannabis is *huge*, it's generating jobs, and it's good for the economy. That should clear up any misconceptions as to whether it is likely to find itself tossed onto the pile of Obama-era reversals, or quietly allowed to prosper despite what would otherwise seem to be an Achilles heel to the GOP, much less hard-line conservatives.

What we *will* debate is the absurd state of regulation when it comes to smoking tobacco versus smoking cannabis. For multi-generational tobacco businesses struggling to map out a future wherein the FDA has literally stated its desire to wipe tobacco out for good, the mainstream rise of cannabis and the increasingly bizarre playing field is getting very personal.

Apparently, there are no conclusive studies that smoking marijuana is as harmful as tobacco, but marijuana smoke does contain many of the same chemicals as tobacco smoke, ones the FDA has deemed carcinogenic. And there are a wide range of other impacts which would certainly seem to compel the FDA to zero in on public health concerns. If it weren't still trying to figure out how to regulate tobacco, that is.

New York City councilman Republican Peter Koo precisely captured the irony recently at a recent city hearing about New York state's potential legalization of so-called recreational marijuana use when he pondered, "We're trying to stop people from smoking all kinds of things. Why do you want to legalize marijuana?"

Such is current state of the nation. Small producers of hand made cigars and traditional pipe tobaccos are hanging on for dear life in face of FDA regulations which, if implemented as outlined, would render their business virtually inviable.

And never even mind the chaos surrounding the mad rush to embrace cannabis's non-psychoactive miracle component, CBD, which is also illegal when derived from marijuana but not considered a controlled substance if derived from hemp, a type of cannabis that that's low in the psychoactive compound THC and was legalized—more or less—in December. Yet, all CBD is regulated by the FDA, and authorized only for use in two approved drugs.

That hasn't stopped multiple industries from incorporating CBD into food, drinks, and personal care items. Some states are now scrambling to legalize it after the fact, and businesses are crying foul for the "unfair" enforcement of long-standing laws. It's enough to make any traditional tobacco farmer, hand-rolled cigar maker, or fourth generation tobacconist's head spin.

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Casa de Montecristo Washington, D.C. Cigar Store, Lounge

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In February, Casa de Montecristo completed the relocation of the former JR Cigar lounge to a new location featuring an updated range of customer amenities. The new Casa de Montecristo-Washington cigar lounge opened on February 12 on 19th Street N.W., between L and M Streets, two blocks away from its former site. It's the company's 28th location nationally.

However, in a major departure from Capitol tradition and stereotypes around politics and cigar lounges, the rooms aren't filled with smoke due to city restrictions; rather, a well-appointed patio area is available for cigar smoking as part of the 4,000 square-foot facility, offering "the finest cigars available" and "great accommodations," according to Luis Miguel Torres, CEO & Head of Casa de Montecristo.

The entire two-story building is occupied by Casa de Montecristo and features two bars serving beer on tap, wine, and spirits and featuring eight HD TVs on both levels. The ground floor bar has bar-height level pub tables and chairs to supplement seating at the bar. Meanwhile, a second floor lounge features custom made leather lounge chairs and sofas, among other seating. Rather than a walk-in humidor, a total of 16 custom-made humidified wall units on the ground floor are made from Spanish cedar and display some 320 linear feet of premium cigars. On the second floor are 60 similarly made private humidor lockers for customers to store their own premium cigar collections.

"We look forward to bringing the cigar-life experience to new heights in Washington," Torres says.

Major Drug Store Chains Lead Underage Sales Violations

SILVER SPRINGS, MD—In February, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) initiated enforcement action against certain retail locations of Walgreen Co. and Circle K Stores Inc. for repeated violations of restrictions on the sale and distribution of tobacco products, including sales of cigars and menthol cigarettes to minors. The agency filed complaints seeking No-Tobacco-Sale Orders (NTSO), which seek to bar the two specific retail locations from selling tobacco products for 30 days. The two retail outlets that are the subject of these NTSO actions are a Walgreens store in Miami, Fla., and a Circle K store in Charleston, S.C. Walgreens is currently the top violator among pharmacies that sell tobacco products, with 22 percent of the stores inspected having illegally sold tobacco products to minors, says the FDA.

New&Notable

Fred Naumman, who established **Smoke and Fire Cigars** as an online retailer of premium cigars in 2014, celebrated the grand opening of a brick & mortar retail store in Beatrice, Nebraska in February.

The store was established to provide premium cigar consumers in the Beatrice area a "more accessible location with craft beer fanning the flames,"

says Naumman. The shop is located in the recently re-purposed historic Mercantile Building, which also houses the Stone Hollow Brewery. Naumman says he plans to work with the brewery to offer cigar and beer pairings, as well as other specials. Although smoking isn't allowed in the building, patrons may light up on an adjacent outside terrace. Smoke and Fire Cigars has its own house brand of cigars, operates

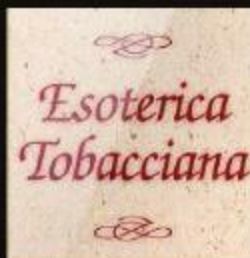


fully stocked humidors at local hospitality businesses, and provides on-site retail cigar sales at events.

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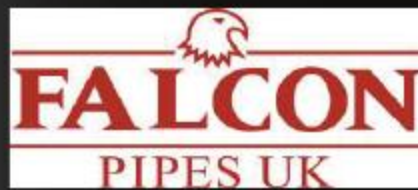


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► Coalition of American Cigar Rollers formed in Partnership with CRA to Oppose Cigar Regulations

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Cigar Rights of America (CRA) has joined with independent American cigar rollers as founding members of a new organization to advocate against regulation that threatens the survival of companies that manufacture cigars within the United States.

According to an announcement from CRA, the Coalition of American Cigar Rollers will serve as a political voice for the last remnants of what was once 42,000 cigar factories spanning the nation. The coalition strategy includes briefings for each of their state governors, letters and briefing for their delegation to the U.S. Congress, outreach and meetings with the Trump Administration, and engaging their customers in the fight against federal regulation into the artisan craft of premium handmade cigars.

The group will have two national co-chairs, each bringing their unique perspective and history to the need to mitigate the threat of federal cigar regulations: Danny Difabio, owner of the Rodriguez Cigar Factory in Key West, Fla. and Sandy Cobas, owner of El Titan de Bronze cigars in Miami. Both Difabio and Cobas bring generations of history to the

fight against government intrusion into the cigar industry. The group was inspired by a January 28 story on CigarAficionado.com that highlighted 50 remaining U.S. based businesses that are rolling cigars.

Difabio stated in a press release, "This is an important new step. The Cigar Aficionado story brought national attention to our very presence, and the skilled artisans that we each employ. The cigars produced in our small factories are among the best in the world, and made in America... We just want to continue this art form that has been passed down from generation to generation."

Added Cobas, "I hope that we can do our part to bring attention to the impact these regulations will have on women and minority owned businesses. Each of us in this coalition are small family-owned businesses. To confront the paperwork, expense, and time of these regulations is simply too much for many in this industry.

The coalition debuted with 34 cigar rolling members from 16 states and expects to add additional companies. Contact Patrick Carr, CRA Coordinator, patrick.carr@cigarrights.org.

► Gran Habano Announces California Distribution

DORAL, FLA.—Gran Habano has announced that as of April 1, 2019, the Honduran cigar maker started direct distribution of its full catalog to retailers in the state of California, one of the largest cigar markets in the U.S. Gran Habano hopes that by providing this service to the Golden State, the brand will grow into an important part of retailers' offerings to clients who love Gran Habano cigars.

"We have long looked at California as one of the company's strongest markets, and we look forward to continuing our growth in the state through this new distribution opportunity," says George Rico, president of Gran Habano.

Through its expansion, Gran Habano will bring its core line of products to more retailers in the state of California. In addition to its

most popular Connecticut #1, Habano #3, and Corojo #5 core lines, Gran Habano's portfolio of brands includes the highly rated La Conquista, S.T.K. Black Dahlia, Blue in Green, Persian King, and others, all manufactured at its factory in Honduras.

Terry Coleman of TMC Sales, Inc. (Tel: 323-646-0941, Email: terry@tmcsales.net) is available to assist California retailers with any questions and purchasing needs. Retailers can also contact Luis Pascual at Gran Habano (Tel: 305-420-6256, Email: sales@ghcigars.com) to obtain more information on the required paperwork and documentation needed to open an account, including a new customer application package, a valid retail tobacco license in California, and establishing payment options.



► Ned Sharpless Named Acting FDA Commish

SILVER SPRING, MD—Following the abrupt and unexpected announcement by FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb on March 5 that he would be resigning his post in early April, the Health and Human Services Department announced that Dr. Ned Sharpless, who has served as the director of the national Cancer Institute since 2017, was named acting FDA commissioner.

Alex M. Azar III, secretary of health and human services, said the appointment is temporary, and that the search for a permanent commissioner is underway. President Trump must nominate a successor, who must be confirmed by the Senate.

Sharpless has been a supporter of Gottlieb's priorities on tobacco and vaping products, including limiting nicotine in cigarettes and stricter vaping regulations. It is unclear whether the acting commissioner will be able to advance Gottlieb's proposals.



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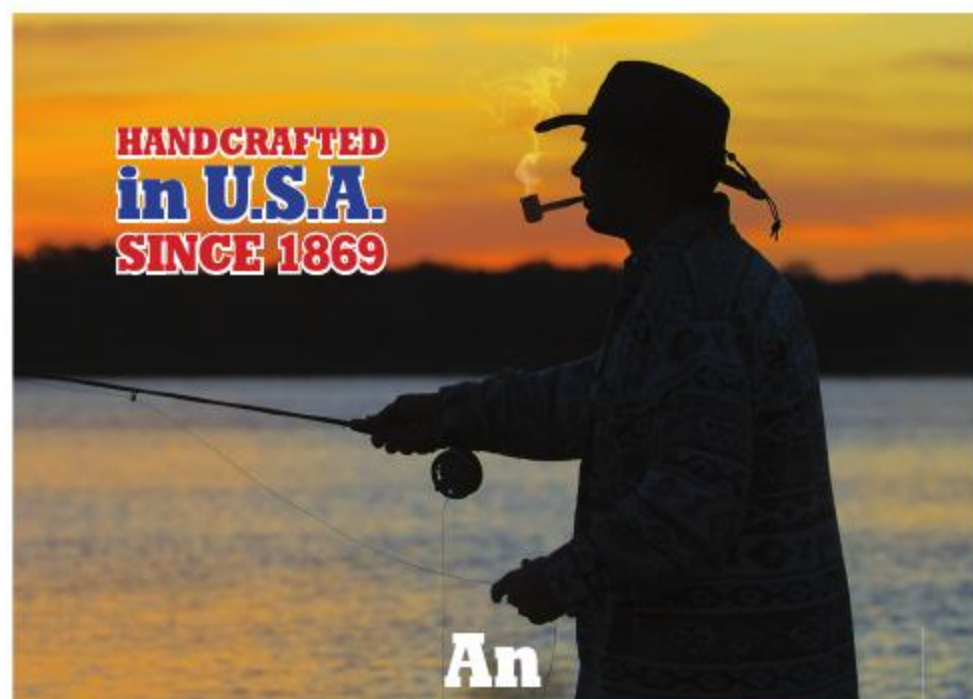
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► McConnell Announces Bill to Raise Age to Purchase Tobacco to 21

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) announced plans at a press conference to introduce legislation in the U.S. Senate to raise the nationwide minimum age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 21. The McConnell bill, which will be introduced in May, will cover all tobacco products, including vaping devices.

McConnell cited parental concern over “an unprecedented spike in vaping among their teenage children,” in seeking the age increase.

“Unfortunately it’s reaching epidemic levels around the country,” said McConnell. “My legislation will be similar to the current system, where retailers have the responsibility to verify the age of anyone buying tobacco products—we’ll just raise the age from 18 to 21. Twelve states have enacted laws to raise the purchasing age of tobacco products to 21. These bills will serve as helpful guidance as I craft my federal legislation. For example, my bill will include an exemption for men and women who serve in uniform, similar to state T21 laws.”

► FDA Extends Product Testing Deadline

SILVER SPRING, MD—In a victory for the premium cigar industry led by the International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers Association (IPCPR) and Cigar Rights of America (CRA), the FDA has delayed a planned Nov. 8, 2019 deadline for reporting the results of testing for harmful and potentially harmful constituents in every cigar and pipe tobacco product sold in the United States.

This was a huge problem because the technology for testing premium cigars does not exist, and the FDA had provided no guidance on how it was supposed to be accomplished for cigars and pipe tobacco, explains IPCPR.

The new deadline is now six months for large manufacturers, and nine months for small manufacturers, after the FDA releases guidance on how the testing should occur. There is no indication that such guidance will be released during 2019, although the industry is closely following developments.

The FDA’s delay of the testing reporting deadline follows several presentations to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of IPCPR, CRA, and CAA on the unfairness of requiring testing and reporting in the absence of guidance and rules defining the process.

“IPCPR is pleased that we now have some clarity and the uncertainty for this looming deadline has been addressed,” said executive director Scott Pearce. “Our retail members can now operate their businesses with more confidence about the future.”

The FDA acted in advance of a Monday, March 11 deadline, by which IPCPR and CRA had promised to move for an injunction against the Nov. 8, 2019 deadline if FDA had not delayed it. CRA and IPCPR say they will continue to engage with the courts and the FDA regarding the HPHC reporting requirement and deadlines and regarding next steps in the litigation process.

► Personnel Moves

> **David Lafferty** has joined **Dunbarton Tobacco & Trust (DTT)** as vice president of sales, assuming the responsibilities of his new position on March 1st, 2019. Lafferty spent 11 years employed with Drew Estate in sales positions. He started his career with the company as the New England sales representative and earned a series of promotions, first to east coast regional sales manager and then to director of national accounts prior to his departure in May 2018. Lafferty then served as the executive director of Nat Sherman International in their premium cigar division until his scheduled departure on February 28th, 2019. Dunbarton Tobacco & Trust is a small family business co-owned by founder Steve Saka and his wife Cindy.



Lafferty

> **Rob Maneson** has joined **Fontem Ventures B.V.** as vice president of sales. Previously, Maneson served as general manager of JR Cigar, a position he held for nearly two years. Both Fontem Ventures and JR Cigar are units of Britain-based Imperial Brands PLC. Maneson held a series of positions at Imperial Brands starting in 2013 as trade marketing manager for premium cigars at Altadis U.S.A., where he moved to head of trade marketing and key accounts; retail strategy and marketing director at JR Cigar; and general manager of Casa de Montecristo. Meanwhile, **Davide Moro**, an 18-year veteran of various Nestlé units, joined JR Cigar as c.e.o. in April.

> **ITG Brands** has announced two major retirements from its executive ranks. **Kathy Sparrow**, executive vice president of marketing and sales, has announced her retirement, effective April 1, completing more than 39 years of service. Sparrow started as a sales representative in Chicago; joined the corporate office in Greensboro as

director of sales planning, and was promoted to general manager of sales planning and operations in 1997. She was named vice president of sales in 1999 and senior vice president in 2006. In 2016, Sparrow was promoted to her current leadership position as executive vice president of marketing and sales.

In addition, **Fred Paternostro**, vice president of sales, has announced his intention to retire once his participation in transition planning is concluded. Paternostro concludes an esteemed 39-plus career having joined the company in 1979 as a sales representative in Paterson, N.J. In 1986, he was promoted to division manager in Columbus, Ohio, then regional sales manager in Jacksonville, Fla. in 1990, followed by his appointment as director of sales for the company's mid-western states in 1996. In 2009, he was named vice president of area sales. He was promoted and moved to the corporate office in 2015 as vice president national sales, and proved to be invaluable in the integration of the ITG Brands sales organization following the sale of Lorillard.

In Memoriam

Maria Sierra, 70

Cuban-born cigar roller Maria Sierra passed away in January at age 70.

At age 18 in Havana, Sierra was among a select group of females permitted to enter the Cuban cigar industry for the first time in 1967, training at the El Laguito factory under Fidel Castro's personal cigar rollers. Sierra showed a natural affinity for the craft, and went on to become one of the factory's best rollers, achieving Level 9, the top skill set. She retired from El Laguito in 1998 and moved to Miami in 2009, where she immediately joined El Titan de Bronze, the boutique maker owned by Sandy Cobas. Sierra retired for good in 2017.

"We at El Titan de Bronze are saddened to hear of the passing of our dear Maria Sierra. Maria was legendary, showcasing her incredible skills and talent throughout her distinguished career, both in Cuba and here with us. Cigar enthusiasts from all over the world came to see her work her craft for the exclusive Goldie series for La Palina Cigars. We were blessed to have called her one of our own. We at El Titan will miss her incredibly; her legend will live on forever."



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► Calendar

JUNE 29–JULY 2, 2019

IPCPR 87th Annual Convention and International Trade Show

Sands Expo and Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact: International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers Association, Washington, D.C., Tel: (202) 621-8064 Email: info@ipcpr.org, Web: ipcpr.org.

AUGUST 22–23, 2019

23rd Annual Smoker Friendly Conference & Tobacco Festival

Omni Interlocken Resort, Broomfield, Colo. Contact: Mary Szarmach, Toll-free: (888) 751-2785 ext. 217, Email: info@smokerfriendly.com, Web: smokerfriendly.com.

AUGUST 23–24, 2019

North American Society of Pipe Collectors (NASPC) 2019 Swap/Sell Pipe Show

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dublin, Ohio. Dealer Tables, \$120. Attendance free to the public. Information and table reservations: Jeff Knoll, (614) 306-6239, email: naspc@graphic-touch.biz, Web: naspc.org

SEPTEMBER 20–22, 2019

20th Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show

Argosy Casino Hotel Spa & Casino, Riverside, Mo. Exhibit hall, smoking tent, CIPC pipe smoking contest, pipe care and refurbishing clinic, silent auction, carving contest. Contact: Greater Kansas City Pipe Club, Email: admin@gkcpipeclub.com, Web: gkcpipeclub.com.

SEPTEMBER 20–22, 2019

InterTabac/InterSupply 2019

Messe Westfalenhallen Exhibition Centre, Dortmund, Germany. Web: intertabac.de.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019

CORPS 2019 Pipe Smoker's Gathering

Manchester Moose Lodge, North Chesterfield, Va., Admission \$5, CORPS members free. Smoking permitted; food, coffee, drinks and cash bar on site. Pre-show events Friday, Sept. 27: Sutliff Factory Tour Extravaganza, dinner at Extra Billy's BBQ patio, pipe smoking permitted. Info: conclaveofrichmondpipesmokers.org.

NOVEMBER 9–10, 2019

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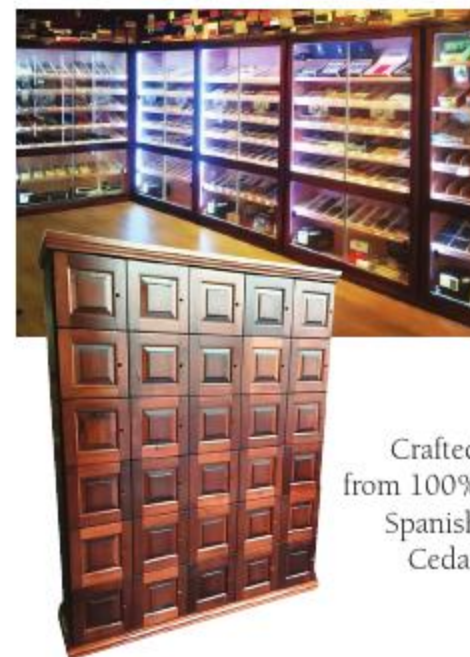


Retail Stores and Walk-in Humidors



Casa de Montecristo, Dallas, Texas

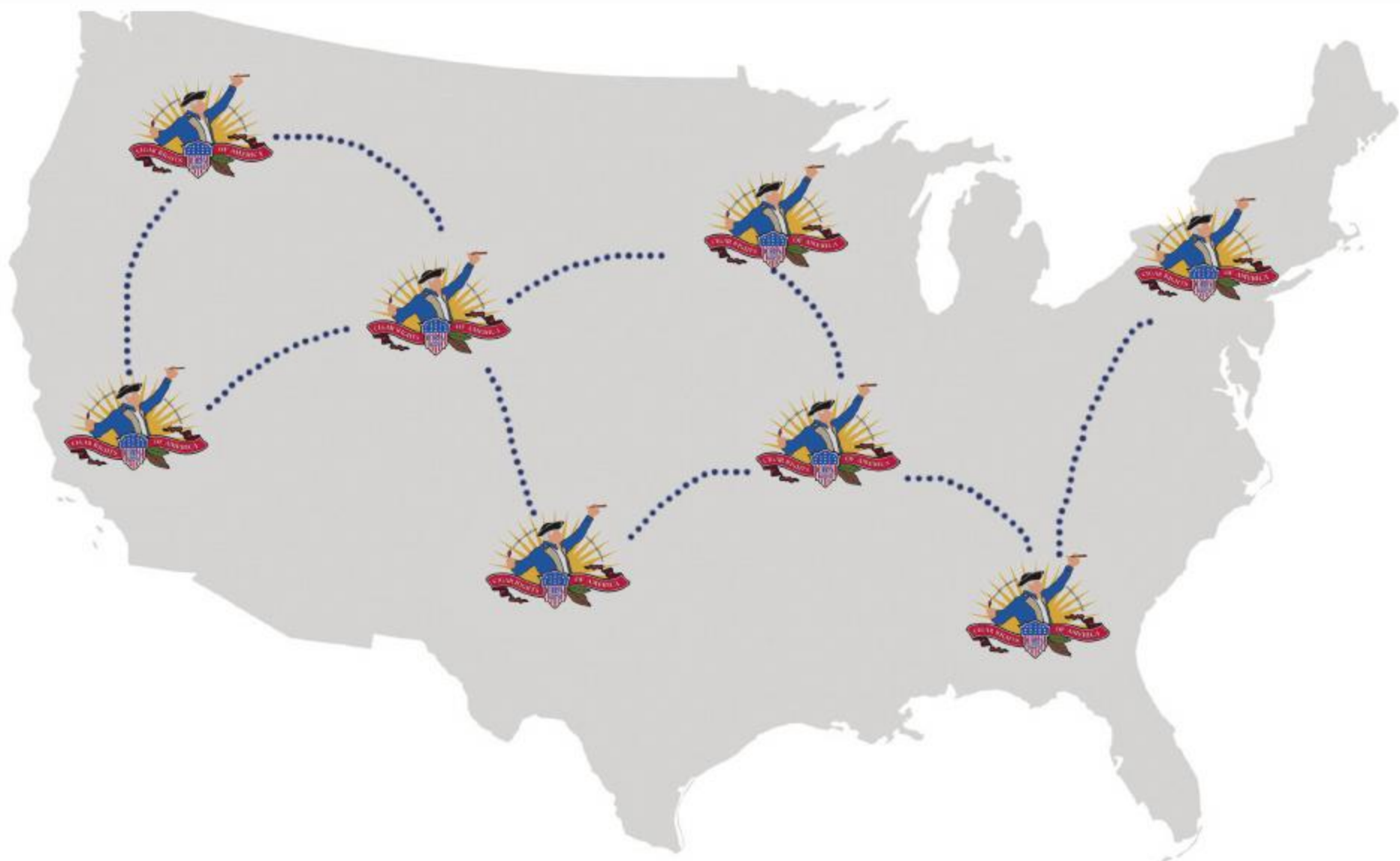
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- George 'Shorty' Koebel, Owner of Havana Connections in Richmond, Virginia

"Our businesses need all of the marketing exposure possible, and with CRA appealing to a national audience, this is well worth the cost. I also like the fact that we can have some input on issues affecting the industry."

- Joel Schwartz, Owner of Ford & Haig Tobacconists in Scottsdale, Arizona

"This can be a great way to highlight store events, especially when new cigars are coming onto the market. When the manufacturers are in our shop, this can be a way to reach a broader audience than just those that walk into the store, or that we see on a regular basis."

- Julie Neumann, Owner of Cigars & More in Libertyville, Illinois



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Fulfilling a Dream

Famed NBA star Karl Malone may be synonymous with Utah (Jazz), but for the Malone family home is in Ruston, La., where their Legends Cigar and Vape shop is a dream come true. > **FRANK SELTZER**

Most people know Karl Malone as one of the best to ever play basketball professionally. “The Mailman” was Malone’s nickname because of his consistent delivery in games. During the 18 years he spent in the NBA, he racked up impressive records: two-time NBA Most Valuable Player, 14-time All Star, and two-time Gold Medal winner in the Olympics as part of the dream team in basketball and as a power forward. Malone scored just under 37,000 points, second only to Kareem Abdul Jabar. Most of his time was playing with the Utah Jazz and one year with the Los Angeles Lakers. But Malone is more

than a star athlete—he is also a patient businessman who last year fulfilled his dream of nearly 30 years, namely to have a cigar shop and a cigar of his own.

Last year, Malone opened Legends Cigar and Vape in Ruston, Louisiana, just five minutes from his home. The store is run and owned by his daughter Kadee. Karl owned the store initially, but Kadee did all the work. “I literally helped build this place,” she explains. “I painted everything. Me and my mom decorated it. I put up every cigar shelf and stocked them all.”

Three weeks after the store opened, Karl called Kadee at 8 in the morning

>Above: Karl Malone and his daughter Kadee, who operates—and now owns—Legends Cigar and Vape. Below: Malone in tobacco fields of La Aurora in the Dominican Republic.



Photo: La Aurora

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You can find more information at www.roll4you.com
or contact directly roll4you@delfortgroup.com



>Left: Malone and his daughter Kadee. Kadee and her mom were instrumental in completing the store's build-out last summer. In addition to its fully stocked premium cigar humidor, the shop also sells traditional pipe, vape products including Legends own house labeled brand, and CBD oils. It also carries La Aurora Barrel Aged by Karl Malone, which is just beginning to ramp up distribution.

and told her to get down to the store. She thought something was wrong, so immediately ran over to the store. But there was no emergency; it turned out that because of all Kaydee's hard work, Karl felt she deserved ownership. Adds Kaydee,

that moment, Karl fell in love with cigars and their culture, which he likens to another passion of his—hunting.

"Cigars are the one thing [that are] like the hunting world," Malone explains. "You have to have the passion and a

talk while they smoke. It makes for a great community."

Throughout his NBA career, Malone kept smoking his cigars and nurturing the dream of having his own place and his own cigar. Playing in the NBA did not give him the time to follow that dream, but in retirement from pro ball he knew he wanted to do something; he is not one who is content being idle. When we spoke for this story, Malone was rehabbing his knee from an operation the previous week. As we were wrapping up the interview, his wife Kay came in and told him to "stop sitting around and get back to work."

Malone, in fact, has a lot of businesses to keep track of. "Our big business is in the car business in Utah," Karl explains. "We do trucking down here in Ruston. I have dump trucks and stuff and I drive one. I also buy timberland down here and we do some construction, not big jobs, but land clearing and all that. Then we develop lots. I'm working on a small subdivision with six lots, and I'm doing that on my own when time permits. And that's what we do down here. In Utah,

> Throughout his NBA career, Malone kept smoking his cigars and nurturing the dream of having his own place and his own cigar. Playing in the NBA did not give him the time to follow that dream, but in retirement from pro ball he knew he wanted to do something...

"We're 50-50 on this, but I like to say I'm 90 and he's 10 'cause he just shows up."

The idea of the store began during Malone's fifth year in the NBA, at age 27. By then he had solidified his leadership position at the Jazz, scoring an average of 31 points per game. One evening, Karl and some of the Utah Jazz players went out for dinner in Miami. At the end of the night, they decided to have a cigar. At

little money, but not that much. With a cigar, whatever your taste and whatever you can afford, works.

"Cigar stores can be home to anybody. So you could have a banker in here, a governor in here, but then you could have someone off the street and they'd be in here," he continues. "Here at Legends, we don't have [a single] TV in here, because people should sit and





we own franchises for Power Sports, Polaris Textron, Suzuki, Kawasaki, Honda Generator, EZ Go golf carts, Mitsubishi, Dodge Ram Jeep Chrysler, Toyota, and an accessory department—all the lifting of the vehicles and a big body shop.”

you if you are a celebrity, but didn’t really want him involved in the process.

His frustration grew because he did not just want his name on a cigar...he wanted to have one made for him. After years of frustration and lots of dead ends,

> Karl found that many manufacturers will talk to you if you are a celebrity, but didn’t really want him involved in the process. His frustration grew because he did not just want his name on a cigar...he wanted to have one made for him.

The cigar shop sits on land Karl and the family purchased years ago. They had planned a big development there, but then the economy went bust, so he waited...about 15 years. In the meantime, he continued to pursue the idea of getting his own cigar. What Karl found was that many manufacturers will talk to

a friend of the family mentioned they had a connection to the Leon family at La Aurora. After a few phone calls, Karl made his first trip to Santiago and La Aurora during the 2017 Procigar Festival.

Guillermo Leon, who heads up La Aurora, told me he might have a special guest at the Festival’s “White Night Din-

ner,” so-called because of the traditional Dominican linen attire, held at the Monument to the Heroes of the Restoration.

The possible guest? Karl Malone. Leon wasn’t 100 percent certain the guest would show, but Karl was.

“We walked to the top of the stairs of the monument and when we got there Mr. Leon started shuffling people at his table so we could sit with him,” Malone recalls. “They realized, ‘that’s Karl Malone.’ Mr. Leon had three cigars and he one lit up. I took one [of the cigars I brought] out and he looked at me and he handed me one of his. I lit up, and Mr. Leon looked at me and he said, ‘tell me about your love of cigars.’

“I love all of your cigars,” I said, “and why doesn’t someone market your cigars? That’s when the process began.”

During that stay in Santiago, Malone went to the La Aurora factory and was impressed. He and Guillermo shared their passion for cigars, and Karl and his family would make many more trips down to Santiago and La Aurora over the next two years as they developed his cigar. Last year at the 2018 IPCPR Trade Show, Malone debuted his effort—La Aurora Barrel Aged by Karl Malone. The cigars use an Ecuadoran wrapper over Brazilian binder and fillers from Peru, Nicaragua, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. They come in four sizes: Churchill, Robusto, Belicoso, and Sumo Toro, with price points between \$9 and \$12 per stick, presented cello-wrapped in 20-count Cuban dress boxes. They feature a distinctive orange basketball on the band.



As Karl was finishing up blending the cigar, Kadee was building out Legends, which does not have the Malone name attached to it but does incorporate his jersey number—32. Legends had its grand opening in November, but the cigars took a little while longer to get out. Malone wanted to make sure he

had the best people in place for his distribution and initially he could only sell them in his own store in Ruston. Then in January, Miami Cigar and Company announced that they would be handling the distribution for Malone with the cigars starting to ship in March.

While Kadee likes cigars, she's also interested in CBD oil, which is legal to sell in Louisiana. She says that playing basketball and running track in high school, where the floor was basically concrete, really hurt her knees and that CBD oil was the one thing that helped her. In fact, Kadee is developing her own line of CBD products, and the store also sells vape products. At the time of the official opening, the store's merchandise was about 80 percent cigars and 20 percent vape and CBD, but they are just starting to advertise what they have.

Kadee has big plans for Legends. Her dad has 5-11 Tactical by Karl Malone business across the street from Legends, and he is going to be opening nine more of the 5-11 stores. Kadee plans to have a Legends in each of those locations. 5-11 Tactical and casual clothing is the only business featuring Karl's name outside of Utah. Everything in Ruston is about his family, not about him, he explains.

And as for Legends, is it only Karl Malone? Nope. Says Kadee, "To us a Legend is not just an athlete or a politician. It is also people you know...like a janitor at a school who has been there for 50 years...he's actually a legend. It is people who have changed people's lives."

But with Ruston being home to the Malones, can you expect Karl to be sitting there smoking? He admits the shop is for him, but also for anybody who wants to come. When he is not working clearing land, fishing, or hunting, most likely Karl will be in his shop smoking and talking. **S**



More than Just Cigars

Karl Malone's relationship with Guillermo León broadened this year with Malone becoming the U.S. distributor of E. León Jimenes 110th Anniversario Rum by La Aurora. Until recently, the ultra premium rum was only available at the La Aurora store located within the factory in Santiago.

The rum was unveiled for the company's 110th anniversary in 2013. The idea began in 2010 when Leon decided he needed something special to pair with his cigars. León worked with Ron Barceló for several years trying to find just the right flavors for the rum. Gustavo Velayos—the sales manager for La Aurora—joked that he and Guillermo were drinking rum almost every day for three years until the blend was right.

The result was a distinctive, deep-flavored dark rum made in the Barceló tradition using neither molasses nor raw sugar cane, but solely the highly prized sugar cane juice for a pure flavor. The rum is unique in that it spends its first eight years aging in virgin American White Oak barrels, giving it most of its flavor. But then the last two years are spent in virgin French Oak, giving it a roundness, character, and finish. The Beverage Testing Institute in Chicago rated E. León Jimenes rum a 97 out of a possible 100 or "superlative."

Malone had said he generally does not like dark liquor, but once he tasted the E. León Jimenes rum, and paired it with a cigar, he changed his mind and decided he wanted to bring it to the United States. The rum beautifully compliments Malone's Barrel Aged cigar. Production is extremely limited (25,000 bottle annually, with 15,000 allocated for the U.S.), but it should start showing up in small quantities in fine liquor stores in the U.S. later this year. —Seltzer

Legends Cigar and Vape, Ruston, La.,
Tel: (318) 224-7205, Web: legendsvape.com.



Photos:
La Aurora



Procigar Festival 2019: Dominican Cigars Maintain their Luster

The balance of U.S. premium cigar imports may have tipped to Nicaragua's favor in recent years, but the Dominican Republic still dazzles with top-quality, exciting releases. > **BY FRANK SELTZER**

The 12th annual Procigar Festival took place in the Dominican Republic February 17th through 22nd. Despite occurring at the same time as the Habanos festival in Cuba this year, the week-long Dominican event drew a record crowd of 334 participants from over 20 countries.

The festival began on Sunday in La Romana at the beautiful Casa de Campo resort. Participants got to relax on Monday with beach activities and enjoyed a cigar seminar while cruising on a catamaran to Saona Island. Tuesday began the tours of factories as the attendees visited the world's largest cigar factory, Tabacalera de Garcia, just outside Casa de Campo which was marking its 50th anni-

versary. Then guests enjoyed a welcome party held this year at the Hodelpa Garden Court hotel which featured a much larger pool area than previous years at the Gran Almirante—the headquarters hotel.

Upon registration, every guest received the first of four boxes of cigars which included a special lighter and cutter and cigars from all 11 Procigar members. In total, each participant took home about \$700 worth of special cigars.

Wednesday began the tours and every person had their choice of which factory or field they wished to see. The 10 members of Procigar in Santiago opened the doors to their factories and tobacco fields. We learned that this year there was very little rain during the

growing season. Overall this makes the tobacco leaves stronger and more flavorful, but at the same time if there is no water, the plants suffer. Many farms have drip irrigation to supply the needed water, but some farms did not have such systems, which cut into their yield. The farms without irrigation are now adding it. Klaas Pieter Kelner with Davidoff said in Jicome during the growing season, it normally gets about 80 millimeters of rain a month. This season there was no rain in December, 1 millimeter in January, and about 35 millimeters in February. The farm does have irrigation so everything was fine.

The number of participants swelled every consecutive night for the dinners, with about 850 attending the so called white night on Thursday atop the monument grounds in downtown Santiago.

On Friday night, the festival concluded with a charity auction for the Voluntariado Jesus con los Ninos—a group which aids ailing children in the Dominican Republic, and Sociedad San Vincent de Paul which assists the elderly in the country. Special humidors and other art objects were sold under the hammer and raised about \$175,000 for the groups. **S**



> Above, left: A tobacco plant seedling. Above, right: Preparing traditional andullo tobacco in a yagua, or palm leaves, at Jose Mendez. Right: Brand ambassador Klaas Pieter Kelner leading a tour group at Davidoff.



Left: Manuel Quesada, founder, Quesada Cigars, and daughter Raquel. Right: Preparing harvested tobacco leaves for barn curing. Below: De Los Reyes Cigars president Nirka Reyes explains the resting process for finished cigars at the factory.





Proposed Guidance from FDA on Flavored Cigars

FDA's plans for regulating flavored cigars and vape products were unveiled in March; as written they will have a big impact on the industry. With only a small period for public comments before the agency sets final language, a quick response was crucial. >BY THOMAS BRIANT

On March 13, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a proposed Guidance regarding flavored electronic cigarettes and flavored cigars. In the Guidance, FDA explains how it intends to administer and enforce current law and how regulated parties can comply with the regulations.

The National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO) began an immediate review of the Guidance and submitted questions to the FDA asking for clarification of some of the proposed changes. The agency indicated that it is unable to answer our questions currently and suggested that we include our questions in comments that NATO submits regarding the Guidance document. The deadline for submitting public comments to the FDA was originally set for April 15, 2019, merely a month after the Guidance was issued, but following formal requests by NATO and others, FDA extended the comment period to April 30, 2019. Previous extension requests for

other tobacco-related comment periods had resulted in 30, 60, or 90-day extensions by the FDA, ranking this as the smallest reprieve to date.

None of the proposed restrictions on flavored electronic cigarettes or flavored cigars are effective until the FDA reviews all comments submitted, adopts changes it deems necessary, and issues a final version of the Guidance.

The Guidance will apply to flavored "electronic nicotine delivery systems" or ENDS, and flavored cigars. Regarding cigars, the FDA Guidance defines "cigars" as "a tobacco product that: (1) is not a cigarette; and (2) is a roll of tobacco wrapped in leaf tobacco or any substance containing tobacco. This includes all types of cigars including little cigars, cigarillos, and other types of cigars."

As part of the FDA's final deeming rule, which extended the agency's regulatory authority to include cigars, pipe tobacco, electronic cigarettes/vapor products, and hookah tobacco, the agency has followed a two-pronged

compliance policy.

First, the FDA extended the time period for manufacturers to file substantial equivalence (SE) applications and pre-market tobacco applications (PMTA) for newly regulated products that were on the market as of August 8, 2016. The SE and PMTA application filing deadline is August 8, 2021 for newly regulated combustible tobacco products (such as cigars) that came on the market between February 15, 2007 and August 8, 2016.

The FDA Guidance document indicates it will prioritize enforcement action with respect to flavored cigars (other than tobacco-flavored cigars) that were on the market on August 8, 2016. A current reading of the Guidance indicates that the FDA will withdraw the SE and PMTA filing deadline of August 8, 2021 for all flavored cigars except tobacco flavored cigars. Technically, this means that flavored cigars would be on the market illegally and need to be removed from the market if the Guidance remains unchanged and goes into effect.

The impact on the industry will likely be significant. There are many questions that demand clarification, and submitting comments on the proposed Guidance was critical. NATO, in addition to many other industry members, drafted and filed comments responding to the Guidance document. Proactive retailers and manufacturers who were able to prepare and submit substantive comments during this brief comment period embraced the crucial role of enlightening the FDA about the impact of the proposed changes, constructively encouraging the agency to consider alternatives as opposed to making almost all flavored cigars illegal. Although the comment period is now closed, the FDA Guidance remains available for viewing at fda.gov; search for FDA-2019-D-0661. **S**

Thomas Briant is executive director of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO), Toll-free: (866) 869-8888, Web: www.natocentral.org.



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► Bantam Nicotine Salts E-Liquids from Pyxus International

Bantam Nicotine Salts E-Liquids from Pyxus International, Inc., are 50/50 PG/VG formulas with 48mg of nicotine per milliliter intended for low wattage vaping devices. Bantam salt juices employ the innovative science behind the company's proprietary Pyrisalt formula and are both General Certificate of Conformity (GCC) certified and Child Resistant certified (CRC).

Bantam Nicotine Salts are offered in a dozen flavors, packaged in 30 ml bottles (\$19.99 suggested retail): Watermelon, Water Blossom, Watermelon Spiceberry, Tobacco Mahogany, Tobacco Ambrosia, Tobacco Peanut, Wild Berryade, Strawberry Sour Daiquiri, Citrus Spritz, Citrus Myst Fizz, Grape Watermelon, and Creamy Milk Bar Crunch.

"By combining decades of experience in flavor design and technical knowledge using industry-leading quality standards, we've cracked the code in creating the best possible flavors backed by science," states the manufacturer.

Like all Pyxus products, Bantam e-liquids are 100% traceable back to the raw materials used to produce them through the company's proprietary track and trace platform, Senti. Consumers simply enter the batch number found on every bottle at bantamvape.com to trace the origin of the product from source to market, all the way back to the creator.

Pyxus International, Inc., Morrisville, N.C., Web: bantamvape.com.



► Schmitt's Herbal Snuff: Tobacco Taste

Schmitt's Herbal Snuff, from Rockford Innovations, replicates the taste, texture, and experience of tobacco-based smokeless chew, but without the undesirable effects of nicotine and tobacco.

The product is available initially in three flavors; **Original**, **Wintergreen**, and **Mint**. Each is designed to meet the needs of customers who want to enjoy the experience and taste of smokeless tobacco brands but without the side effects. While the demand for herbal alternatives has resulted in an expanding marketplace, existing offerings all fail to replicate the essential taste, texture, and experience of smokeless tobacco products, notes Rockford, resulting in poor repeat sales when the products fail to meet consumer expectations.

"The challenge we faced was to create healthier snuff for customers that didn't fall into the easy trap of over-flavoring to mask the difference in the underlying product," said Pam Schmitt, c.e.o. of Rockford Innovations. "We developed a proprietary production process that effectively replicates the complexity that comes from curing tobacco to create a product that is tobacco-free which replicates the experience and taste profile customers demand."

Rockford Innovations, LLC,
Seattle, Wa., Tel: (425) 531.2248,
Web: rockfordinnovations.com,
schmittysnuff.com.

► Bold, Belgian-Made Makla Moist Snuff from P&K

Makla is a smokeless tobacco that tucks snugly under the lip. Created from rustica (wild tobacco) using traditional methods, it has a milky sweet flavor that is not acidic like other tobaccos.

The product is ideal for any chewer or dipper looking for a top-quality product or those seeking alternatives similar to Middle Eastern products such as gutkha or pan masala.

Makla offers strong, true tobacco flavor in a loose but highly dense product, packed in convenient 20gm or 25gm plastic tins, depending on the variety.

Four varieties are available, each based on a blend of classic, richly-flavored tobacco: **Makla Ifrikia** (classic chewing tobacco, "like a rush of strong coffee brewed over a caldera of hot lava"); **Makla Red** (distinctively spicy and decidedly flavorful, "sweet black peppers and smoke oak" that's "not for the faint of heart"); **Makla Platinum** (featuring an added touch of sweetness, "like a sticky clump of overripe raisins extracted from a peat bog"), and **Makla Kantara** (featuring a "cool burst" of mint flavor, like "being trampled by an overzealous bull charging through a verdant field of mint, but in a good way").

Phillips & King International, Moorpark, Calif., Web: us.maklaworld.com.





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RATINGS

Cigar Authority: Stockyard **90**

Cigar Coop: Stockyard **91**

Kaplowitz: Trail Boss **A-**
Bull **A-**

Smoke Magazine: Trail Boss **93**



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▶ Sansepolcro Returns from Cornell & Diehl

Small batch pipe tobacco blenders Cornell & Diehl, which released the first initial run of Sansepolcro in 2016, has now completed a new 8,000-can production run of this well-received Virginia mixture.

Merging the Old World with the New, Sansepolcro is a very special entry into the Small Batch project, carefully blended from some of the finest red Virginias from North Carolina and unique, Italian dark-fired leaf—a historical variety of Ky171. Aromatically spicy with earthy, clove-like undertones, this Italian dark-fired leaf is grown in the Sansepolcro region of Italy, which boasts a history and tradition of tobacco cultivation to the 17th century.

Combined with mellow citrus and bread-like notes of the reds, it makes for a wonderful melange of flavors and aromas—at once both familiar and exotic. The mixture is ribbon cut and packed in 2 oz. resealable tins. Suggested retail price, \$11.75.

Laudisi Distribution Group, Inc., Longs, S.C., Tel: (843) 491-4150,
Email: Sales@laudisi.com, Web: laudisi.com, cornellanddiehl.com.



▶ Vauen's Oskar: A Nod to Bauhaus Design

Vauen celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus art style with its pipe model Oskar—an edition designed by Markus Bruckner and inspired by Oskar Schlemmer, a master of the Bauhaus era. The pipe shape has clear geometric shapes and a large, round pipe bowl for a cool smoking experience. The bowl's soft-touch surface gives this model a very special feel. Three models are offered, with fishtail acrylic mouthpieces and finished in white dot quality.

Vauen, Nuremberg, Germany, Tel: +49-911-424-3680, Web: vauen.com.



▶ Moonshine Pipe Co.'s 2019 Pipe of the Year

The Moonshine Pipe Co. 2019 Pipe of the Year is a compact, full bent Oom Paul that provides charm and comfort in equal measure. Affectionately referred to around the shop as the "Oompaulachian," this pipe continues the themes of rugged style and functionality that Moonshine Pipe Co. customers have come to love. The pipe measures 4.5 inches long by 1.63 tall and weighs 1.5 oz.

Available in three sandblasted finishes (Natural, Midnight, and Leather) with a variety of stem colors (Black, White, Amber, Tortoise, and Coffee), the 2019 POTY is a true limited edition and only a single batch was produced. For some finish and stem combos there are only a small handful available. This release is not a regular production pipe, and the manufacturer notes it won't be able to fill custom requests like it does with other shapes.

Moonshine Pipe Co. / Briarworks USA, Columbia, Tenn., Tel: (931) 223-8985,
Web: briarworks.com



▶ Starbuzz Clay Bowls

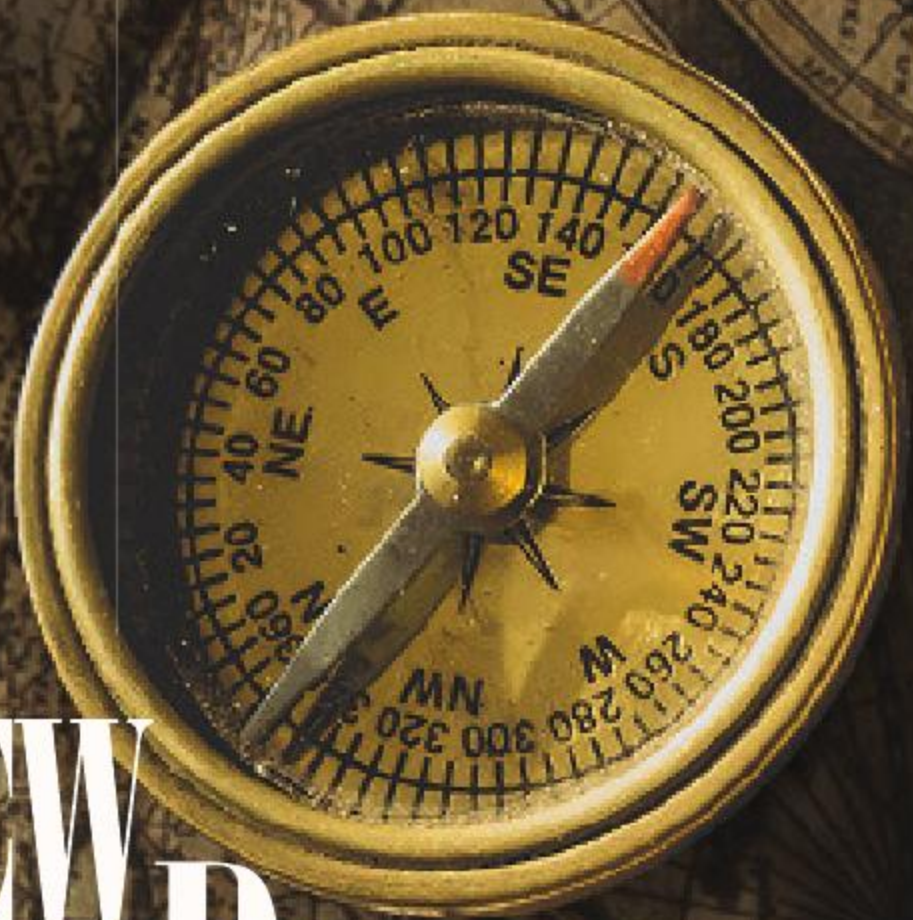
Starbuzz premium clay water pipe bowls in small, large, or spiral versions (from \$4.99 retail) are made from a superior clay compound for maximum durability. Unglazed material is best used for individual flavor retention, says Starbuzz.

Starbuzz, Garden Grove, Calif.,
Tel: (714) 995-4119,
Web: shopstarbuzz.com.

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► Quesada 1974 Commemorates Factory's Founding

Commemorating the founding of the company and factory by the Quesada family in the Dominican Republic in 1974, Quesada 1974 from Quesada Cigars has been launched in the Spanish market. The blend comprises Dominican and Nicaraguan fillers, a Dominican binder, and an aromatic Ecuadorian wrapper.

"The combination of Dominican and Nicaraguan fillers makes this blend medium to full body with rich notes of cedar, pepper, and dry fruits," said Miguel "Miguelin" Núñez, Production Manager at Quesada Cigars, noting the blend delivers a natural sweetness. "A great smoke overall."

Four sizes are offered: Robusto (5 x 50) and Short Robusto (4 x 50) are presented in boxes of 25, and Corona (6 x 43) and Lancero (7 x 38) are presented in unvarnished cabinet-style cedar boxes of 28 cigars.

"This project truly embodies...our heritage and history," said Manuel Quesada, president of Quesada Cigars, "A cigar and a presentation that will speak for itself."

Quesada Cigars, Santiago, Dominican Republic,
Email: info@Quesadacigars.com, Web: quesadacigars.com.



► Limitada Redline and Epicure Short Salomone Shipping from Crux

Crux Cigars has begun shipping its previously announced Limitada Redline Epicure short Salomone to retail partners across the country.

Announced at the 2018 IPCPR Trade Show, the Redline is the first line extension of Crux Cigar's Limitada line since the introduction of the Limitada IPCPR in 2016. The Redline is a 6 x 50 toro finished with a Cuban box press. As with the previously released Limitada PB5 and the Limitada IPCPR, the Redline is produced once per year as a limited edition of 1,000 10-count boxes. It features the proprietary Nicaraguan Engañoso wrapper, suggested retail \$11.99 each in 10-count boxes.



Also shipping is the first of the company's Short Salomone Series, the 6 x 54 Short Salomone (\$12.99 each retail), with an initial production of 500 10-count boxes featuring the Epicure blend of small farm Nicaraguan Condega filler and Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper. The cigars are rolled by a single pair at the La Catedral de Tabaco factory in Estelí, Nicaragua. The Series will include two additional blends: Guild and Limitada. **Crux Cigar Co.**, Grove, Minn., Tel: (612) 221-3370, Web: cruxcigars.com.

► Altadis USA Debuts Henry Clay War Hawk, First Installment of Three-Part Immortal Trio Series

Altadis U.S.A. has released the Henry Clay "War Hawk," the first of a three-part series of cigars named "Immortal Trio." The War Hawk recognizes U.S. Senator Henry Clay's spearheading the movement that led to the War of 1812, and a dedication to U.S. Senator Henry Clay's lasting influence.

Like Clay, the War Hawk cigar is aptly named, says Altadis, as it is a bit rebellious in going against its own tradition by not using a Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper, as do most other Henry Clay brands. It is a complex cigar, boasting unique flavors, with plenty of spice. This medium-bodied blend sports an Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper, which capping a broadleaf binder and Honduran filler. Three sizes are offered: Corona (5 1/2 x 44), \$7 each suggested retail; Robusto (5 x 54), \$7.50 each; and Toro (6 x 50), \$8.00 each.

Altadis says that announcements regarding the next cigar in the Immortal Trio Series will come soon.

Clay, who rose to Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in the early 1800s, was a staunch U.S. national and the leading voice among several young members of Congress who boldly applied pressure on President James Madison to defend the young nation by declaring war against Britain in 1812.

Altadis U.S.A., Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Tel: (954) 772-9000, Web: altadisusa.com.



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You can find more information at www.roll4you.com
or contact directly roll4you@delfortgroup.com

► Davidoff Unveils Avo Improvisation Series LE19

Davidoff of Geneva has announced the seventh installment of its AVO Limited Edition Improvisations Series—based on “unexpected music and cigar inspirations”—with the release of the AVO Improvisation Series LE19.

“Avo Uvezian broke conventions as the first cigar manufacturer to produce an annual limited edition cigar in the year 2001,” states Scott Kolesaire, Director of Marketing, Davidoff of Geneva USA.

This is only the second AVO Improvisations Series release featured in a box pressed format—a 6 x 52 toro—and utilizes tobaccos from three different countries including a silky, dark brown Ecuadorian wrapper; Dominican binder leaf; and five different Dominican and Peruvian filler leaves, delivering a “complex and intense palate stimulation with the perfect balance of thick cream and earthy spice,” according to the manufacturer.

To differentiate this latest installment, Davidoff took inspiration from the box press cigar molds used to shape the cigars after the rolling process in creating this release’s packaging. The cigars feature a custom secondary band unique to this release, and draw further inspiration from cigar molds. Suggested retail is \$15 per cigar, presented in 20-count boxes. Only 2,500 boxes will be released in the U.S.

Davidoff of Geneva, Pinellas Park, Fla.. Tel: (727) 828-5400, Web: davidoff.com.



Villiger Launches La Meridiana in U.S.

Villiger Cigars announced it will introduce a European favorite, the Villiger La Meridiana, to the U.S. market. Villiger Meridiana was conceived by Heinrich Villiger as a way to pay tribute to some long lost Cuban cigar heritage. Released in 1998, it has gained a loyal following among full-flavored cigar enthusiasts in Europe.

The cigar traces its historical roots to a long forgotten Cuban factory named La Meridiana. Owned by Pedro Murias, it was once one of the island’s largest and most well-known cigar factories, which determined the cityscape. Murias was forced to sell the factory due to political unrest during the Cuban war of Independence and faded into history.

Villiger La Meridiana is a full-flavored Nicaraguan puro. The blend features complex flavors that don’t overpower the smoker’s palate, says the company. A special four-year aging lends the wrapper its uniquely distinct hue and flavor.

Five shapes are offered: Corona (5 1/2 x 42), \$6.50 each; Robusto (5 x 50), \$7.50 each; Torpedo (6 x 52), \$8; Churchill (6 7/8 x 48), \$8.50; and Toro (6 x 54 box pressed), \$10.60.

Rene Castañeda, president of Villiger Cigars North America, said Villiger La Meridiana “is an exceptionally elegant and flavorful cigar that I am confident will satisfy the cigar connoisseur.”

Villiger Cigars North America, Miami, Fla., Tel: (604) 954-2398, Web: villigercigars.com



► Drew Estate Now Shipping Herrera Estelí Norteño Edición Limitada Churchill

Drew Estate is now shipping the Herrera Estelí Norteño Edición Limitada to Drew Diplomat retailers nationwide.

Originally released in 2015, the Herrera Estelí Norteño showcases extensively aged tobaccos from the Estelí and Jalapa growing regions of Nicaragua, coupled with a spicy Honduran binder and a rich, bold Mexican San Andrés maduro wrapper. The 2018 release features cigars rolled in 2016, aged two years using the original molds from the initial production. Packaged in 15 count boxes, this 7 x 48 box pressed Churchill features a modified blend of the original Norteño allowing for a “smoother and complex smoke,” according to the manufacturer.

“The Norteño Edición Limitada continues to be one of my favorite projects at Drew Estate,” notes Master Blender Willy Herrera. “This cigar showcases the complexity in the blending process, requiring tweaks of the classic Norteño blend to really shine in the Churchill Vitola.”

The Herrera Estelí Norteño Edición Limitada Churchill is available in 15 count boxes with a suggested retail price of \$217.96 per box.

Drew Estate, Miami, Fla., Tel: (786) 581-1800, Web: drewestate.com.



General Cigar Debuts Cohiba Connecticut

Cohiba Connecticut from General Cigar is a super-premium release that marks a milestone for the brand, as it's the first Cohiba to be wrapped in Connecticut Shade wrapper.

"Our agronomists partnered with an independent grower in Ecuador's Los Rios province to produce a silky and lustrous Ecuadoran Connecticut Shade wrapper," says Cohiba brand ambassador Sean Williams. "Unlike cloth-covered fields that shield the tobacco from the blistering sun in Connecticut, this special wrapper is grown beside Ecuador's Vinces River and beneath the thick, natural cloud cover that blankets the region. The volcanic soil yielded a wrapper that was intentionally developed for its aesthetic qualities, with veins that are barely perceptible. Looks aside, the wrapper is ideal for blending, as it maximizes the filler and binder leaves."

Brazilian Mata Fina and Dominican Piloto Cubano lend complexity to the blend; Nicaraguan Jalapa enhances the strength; and Dominican Olor adds depth. A Mexican San Andean binder delivers optimal combustibility. This mild-to-medium-bodied smoke with a rich aroma and compelling notes of sweetness and spice is handcrafted at General Cigar Dominicana and is a full-time addition to the Cohiba portfolio. It is available in four sizes: Robusto (5 1/2 x 50), \$19.99 each; Toro (6 1/4 x 52), \$21.99 each; and Gigante (6 x 60), \$22.99 each, presented in boxes of 20 cigars, as well as Crystal Robusto (5 x 50), \$20.99 each in boxes of 10 cigars.

General Cigar Company, Glenn Allen, Va., Tel: (804) 935-2809, Web: cigarworld.com.



CAO Solfyre Taps Cinnamon, Whisky

General Cigar has extended its CAO Flavours portfolio with a new spicy-sweet line, Solfyre, with the fiery flavor of cinnamon. The zesty blend is centered around Dominican fillers, a Connecticut Broadleaf binder, and a Cameroon wrapper and infused with spicy notes of cinnamon and the smoky essence of whisky. Available in 4 x 30 cigarillo, 5 1/2 x 42 Corona, and 4 x 40 Petite Corona formats.

SMOKE THE CIGAR REVIEW

90 NAT CICCIO ANIVERSARIO 1965 LIGA NO. 4

Zander-Greg, Inc.



	COMMENTS	BACKGROUND	ORIGIN Nicaragua
AESTHETICS	This is a really rich-looking box pressed cigar. The wrapper is lightly veined and a silky dark chocolate brown. The prelight aroma was not distinctive.	The Nat Ciccio (<i>seek-oh</i>) brand first appeared in 1965, pioneering and dominating the value-priced "factory rejects" category for over three decades. In 2007, Pasadena, California-based Zander-Greg acquired the brand and in 2012 released its first true hand made premium iteration celebrating Nat Ciccio's 1965 launch, but appealing to connoisseurs with extra aged tobacco processed using a tradition unique to Condega, Nicaragua; a pigtail cap; wrapper-enclosed foot; and a semi-box-pressed format. Offered in Robusto, Toro, and Churchill formats.	MAKER Agroindustrial Nicaraguense de Tabacos S.A.
CONSTRUCTION	Feels tightly packed. With a closed foot, a prelight draw was impossible. Once lit, the draw was a little firm but nice. Mottled gray ash, a bit flaky, but it held together very well until about an inch and a half. It may have stayed longer but there was some wind). The burn was a bit uneven initially, but leveled out.		FILLER Nicaragua Habano
FLAVOR AND STRENGTH	This begins as a medium cigar with just a hint of spice, nuts and wood. Half way into it the flavors build, especially the spice. But it never goes over the top. It finishes close to full bodied.		BINDER Nicaragua Habano
GENERAL COMMENTS	This smoke does not offer much of a change (progression) other than building from medium to full. It may scare some people off, but don't let it...it's tasty.		WRAPPER Ecuador Habano SIZE 7 x 52 Churchill PRICE \$7.29

92 CATTLE BARON BULL

Cattle Baron Cigars



	COMMENTS	BACKGROUND	ORIGIN Dominican Republic
AESTHETICS	The cigar looks very well made. The wrapper looks to be a light Havana. There is a silkiness to it with a hint of oil. The color is medium brown and the roll looks perfect	When Montana cattle rancher Bryan Mussard, a cigar lover for over 30 years who raises some of the world's finest, high marbling Angus bulls, crossed paths with cigar maker Phil Zanghi of House of Debonaire, he knew he'd found the perfect partner to fulfill his dream of creating a custom, world-class cigar. After two years perfecting the final blend, Cattle Baron debuted in 2016 and is currently available in five sizes ranging from 4 to 6 inches in length, and 36 to 58 ring gauge. Mussard also created Gorgeous, a highly rated potato vodka.	MAKER House of Debonaire
CONSTRUCTION	Very firm. No soft spots or gaps. At first look you might think the cigar is over-filled and will have a tight draw. But after cutting it this is not the case. It is a firmly packed cigar with lots of tobacco yet maintains a very good draw. After lighting, it produced a razor sharp burn.		FILLER Dominican Seco, Nicaraguan VISO
FLAVOR AND STRENGTH	The flavors are very pleasant. Not a trace of heat or bitterness here. It is a mild plus to medium on strength. Very accessible to any smoker yet not too light. It pairs very well with morning coffee, but also as an after dinner smoke.		BINDER Dominican
GENERAL COMMENTS	Ok, tell me what it is so I can buy more! Though the ring size is a bit bigger than I typically enjoy, it is one I would smoke again and again. Its flavor holds your interest while providing ample smoke.		WRAPPER Nicaraguan Habano SIZE 4 1/2 x 52 PRICE \$7.25

Product **SHOWCASE** >>> GIFTS & ACCESSORIES

> Ammodor Cigar Humidors Now Include Boveda Humidity Packets

Introduced in 1998, Ammodors are the original, patent pending tactical cigar humidors re-purposed from genuine Grade 1 U.S. military surplus metal ammunition boxes and containers. Nearly indestructible, featuring secure flip-top lids with rubber seals around the rim, Ammodors are 100% waterproof and air-tight—ideal for cigar storage. Bearing their original military markings, each container is thoroughly cleaned and sterilized then lined with precision milled 1/4-inch thick solid Spanish



cedar wood, utilizing mitered corners and pressure-fitted construction. The exterior bottom is fitted with felt to protect fine furniture, but these rugged cases are at home anywhere. And now, every Ammodor comes with a complimentary starter kit that includes a Boveda 84% humidity Humidor Seasoning Pack and Boveda 69% humidity pack. Choose from 30-count cigar models starting at \$99,

or 50-count cigar models starting at \$124. Options include cedar-lined lids, Xikar digital hygrometers, Boveda pack holders, cedar trays, powder coating or hydro-dipped finishes, and numerous other container formats. Ammodor works nearly exclusively with veteran-owned suppliers, and donates to several non-profit organizations that support U.S. veterans.

Ammodor, LLC, Richmond, Va., Tel: (804) 588-9222, Email: kevin@ammodors.com, Web: ammodors.com.

> Assouline to Publish *The Impossible Collection of Cigars*

The newest volume in Assouline's bestselling "Ultimate Collection," the much-anticipated *The Impossible Collection of Cigars* (\$995) envisions the ultimate humidor brimming with the most remarkable cigars of the 20th and 21st first centuries from the most prestigious makers. This oversized, 232-page luxury tome is a bid for readers to journey to the fabled Cuban tobacco farms, and get up close and personal with the torcedores as they discover the world's most commendable and coveted cigars. Author Aaron Sigmond's is a list any connoisseur could only dream of, considering the differences and attributes of cigars like Nicaragua's Padrón to Dominican Republic's Arturo Fuente and Davidoff of Geneva, Honduras' Rocky Patel to the Bahamas' Graycliff, and, of course, Cuba's arsenal of legendary smokes. Sigmond is an award-winning publisher, editor, and author who has traversed the world of cigars both personally and professionally for over 30 years, including serving as the founding editor of *Smoke* magazine and *The Cigar Report*, and a contributing cigar editor for *Playboy* and the author of *Playboy: The Book of Cigars*.

Assouline, New York, N.Y., Tel: (212) 419-5631, Web: assouline.com.



> Colibri's Racing-Inspired Apex Jet Flame Lighters

Drawing inspiration from the thrilling action of auto racing, the Apex Jet Flame Lighter from Colibri is named after the point at which the driver increases the throttle for the fastest exit out of a turn. Powered by a robust single-jet flame, the Apex lighter is lit by a single-action push-up trigger. Air intakes on the front and side feed oxygen to the burners. The fuel window is reflectively tinted blue and positioned on



the front of the body for quick butane fuel level readings. A roll cage wraps from the front to the back of the body to help protect the painted body when placed on a tabletop or other surface.

A pachmayr pattern covers the sides and

back of the body to provide a secure grip while handling, while a large fuel adjustment dial on the bottom allows users to easily moderate the flame height. Evocative of the world's most prestigious race cars, colors available are metallic black, charcoal, metallic red, metallic blue, orange, and green. Suggested retail price is \$59, includes gift box and two-year warranty.

Colibri, New York, N.Y., Tel: (347) 415-8562, Email: sales@colibri.com, Web: colibri.com.



> Megaburner, Alec Bradley's Larger-Tank Version of The Burner Lighter

Alec Bradley has released The Megaburner, a butane-based table lighter featuring the same lighter mechanism as its well-known The Burner lighter, but featuring a fuel tank that's several times larger than the original model. Measuring over five inches in height and three inches across, this larger tank is rated for up to eight hours of flame time, good for lighting "5,769 cigars," according to the cigar manufacturer. Since its introduction in 2008, The Burner has impressed legions of cigar smokers with its 48-port "mushroom" flame that delivers a broad, even, wind resistant flame that's ideal for tackling large ring gauge cigars. The lighter features push button ignition and a gas adjustment knob for precise flame adjustment. Suggested retail, \$79.

Alec Bradley Cigar Distributors Inc., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Tel: (954) 321-5991, Web: alecbradley.com.



> Davidoff's New Travel Humidors

Exclusive to Davidoff of Geneva Since 1911 stores and lounges, these models feature lightweight materials, a smart tray engineered exclusively for keeping cigars protected, and innovative welding techniques engineered to lock in humidity, offering travelers the epitome of cigar care on the road. A 2-way humidity device by Boveda is included to ensure cigars are kept at their best up to 45 days. The knitted jacquard fabric is a "reinterpretation of modern tweed for a stylish and elegant look," says Davidoff. Equipped with a handy, black leather strap, these humidors have the "formal elegance of a business suit." The beige Tuscany fabric and the brown, recycled bonded leather are evocative of the comfortable lounge chairs at Davidoff Lounges, while the orange fabric accents add a stylish twist that makes this humidor particularly sleek.

Davidoff of Geneva, Pineallas Park, Fla., Web: davidoff.com.



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Advertiser INDEX >>> & MERCHANDISE LISTING GUIDE

ADVERTISER	Page	ADVERTISER	Page
Arango Cigar Co.	11	New World Luxury Brands PTE Limited	
		<i>Meerschaum and briar pipes</i>	31
Cattle Baron Cigars	29		
		Ohserase Manufacturing, LLC	
Cigar Rights of America (CRA)		<i>Dean's Cigars, Dean's Pipe Tobacco</i>	4
<i>Great American Cigar Shop</i>	17	<i>Farmer's Gold premium pipe tobacco</i>	5
		<i>Signal all-natural cigarettes</i>	C3
delfortgroup			
<i>Special and functional papers</i>	3, 19, 33	Premier Manufacturing, Inc.	
		<i>Belmore cigars</i>	C2
Durfort Holdings			
<i>Debonaire Ultra Premium Cigars, Double Platinum blunt wraps, Kush herbal wraps</i>	9	Rouseco, Inc.	
		<i>Golden Harvest pipe tobacco</i>	27
Klafter's, Inc.	15		
		Sutliff Tobacco Company	
Missouri Meerschaum Company		<i>Dutch Masters, Backwoods all-natural pipe tobacco</i>	13
<i>Corn cob pipes</i>	14, 37		
		Wood Projections, Inc.	
Native Trading		<i>Commercial humidors, store fixtures, humidification equipment</i>	16
<i>Native 100% additive-free cigarettes</i>	7	Zander-Greg	
		<i>Nat Cicco Aniversario 1965 Liga No. 4</i>	C4

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